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ABSTRACT

This trainer's guide is intended to assist supervisors of work-based career training projects in helping students compare the advantages and disadvantages of buying or building a greenhouse, make a decision within cost constraints, and execute the task under supervision. This project is designed to meet the needs of trainees who are of low academic ability. The guide is one in a series of core curriculum modules that is intended for use in combination on- and off-the-job programs to familiarize youth with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in the workplace. Included in the guide are the following components: project information, a summary of the content and approach of the guide, supervisor's notes, background information, lists of tasks and core skills, an action plan that includes suggested learning activities, supervisor and trainee review sheets, and an assessment form. (KC)

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Youth Training Scheme

CORE EXEMPLAR WORK BASED PROJECT

ED265331

People who live in glass houses

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The Further Education Staff College

Coombe Lodge, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6RG ✆ 0761-62503

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ASSESSMENT OF CORE SKILLS

This series of projects contains a number of different formats for recording assessment of core skills. These formats are offered for experimental purposes; none is proven as the 'best' method. All are based on the principle that feedback to trainees is a necessary part of the learning process and that such feedback should include information on core skill development.

Further work is being carried out on the methods of assessing achievement of core skills in work-based learning and of how to log such achievement on a record which trainees can take away from YTS. Some of the results of this work will be included in later MSC/ESF Core Skills Project publications.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT ARE WORK-BASED PROJECTS?

Work-based projects are learning materials which aim to make the most of all the possibilities for developing trainees' skills, knowledge and attitudes in the workplace. They build upon everyday workplace tasks to provide experience of the whole range of YTS learning opportunities.

The projects in this series have been tested with managing agents as part of the YTS Core Project, which is jointly financed by MSC and the European Social Fund. In some cases managing agents will be able to use the projects as they are. In others they will need to be adapted to the circumstances of a particular workplace or to the aims of a particular scheme. Some managing agents will prefer to produce their own projects. For such cases these examples aim to demonstrate some principles of good design in work-based learning materials. These principles are:

To encourage trainees to learn by doing
To make the most of all the experiences which are available to trainees in the workplaces.
To start from a real task which is seen as relevant by all parties involved — trainees, workplace supervisors, trainers and off-the-job tutors.
To help trainees see the relationships between things learnt on- and off-the-job.
To base the assessment of achievement upon trainees' actual performance in tasks.
To look for all the opportunities for learning which arise from a task and, in particular, to help trainees to develop the core skills. These skills, in number, communication, problem-solving and practical activities, are used in a wide variety of tasks and are essential if trainees are to achieve competence in those tasks*. They are the skills — of finding out information, planning how to do things, overcoming difficulties and so on — which help trainees to learn more quickly in new situations, either in the same workplace, in a different one, or in the world outside work.

Such skills are required naturally by the workplace tasks in these projects and, in requiring trainees to go beyond the task itself, the projects deliberately *add* to the range of core skills which are required in an everyday working situation. This is especially important for some of the skills of communication and problem-solving which trainees are often not given the opportunity to exercise in work experience.

These principles can be incorporated in projects for all placements and for trainees of all ability levels. Although the projects in this series follow a common format, there is no single 'best' style. Nor is any special expertise in writing necessary. Good work-based projects can be produced by anyone who is determined to help trainees to exploit all of the potential for learning in work experience.

*A technical manual 'Core Skills in YTS' is currently available from MSC. It is supported by a short introductory leaflet and a practitioner's guide for supervisors. A separate manual is available on computer literacy/information technology

PROJECT INFORMATION

This assignment is designed to meet the needs of a particular group of trainees who are of low academic ability. The group in question are part of a Local Authority MODE B Scheme which provides horticultural services. The unit provides trees, shrubs, and bedding plants to the local Borough's parks, housing estates, schools colleges and offices. Because the trainees in mind are either E.S.M (M) or in need of special remedial education the assignment is written for the supervisor i.e. the format is standard but it is intended that the supervisor will talk through the content with the trainees rather than hand over the written material. The role of the supervisor is crucial therefore and the instructions will have to be interpreted and translated into an appropriate form due to the inability of the group to handle lengthy written instructions.

The CORE SKILLS being promoted in this assignment are in no way different than those being practised in projects designed for more able trainees. The level of achievement attained and the monitoring of the project will be a co-operative venture between the trainees and the supervisor. It is important to bear this in mind when considering the implementation of this particular project.

The project has been used successfully by a number of schemes, especially those operating under MODE B. The greenhouse in itself is, of course, unimportant - what is important is that the trainees are involved as far as possible in planning, costing, designing and making a piece of equipment needed by them and by the scheme. Thus the project, with fairly simple modifications, could fit many different situations in which trainees can take the initiative in and the responsibilities for acquiring such equipment.

This type of assignment needs to be done at a time when the trainees are familiar with the needs of the scheme. The supervisor will need therefore to have gained approval for a certain amount of capital expenditure as this assignment does not deal with hypothetical purchases but in practical decision making with a real outcome - it is doing it, not playing at it!

Finally, the CORE SKILLS covered by Tasks 8, 9 and 10, are deliberately excluded from the Purposes section and the Assessment Form. As they are optional alternatives it cannot be guaranteed that trainees will have the opportunity to demonstrate competence in these areas. Nonetheless, supervisors may wish to record trainees' achievements by using a continuation of the Assessment Form.

SUMMARY

The trainees, are asked to compare the advantages and disadvantages of buying or building a greenhouse, to make a decision within cost constraints, and to execute the task. This will be closely monitored by the supervisor and, it is often the supervisor who will carry out the recommendations of the group after having discussed each task carefully with them.

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SUPERVISOR'S NOTES

This work based project is designed to focus the trainee upon the CORE SKILL areas of: number; communication; practical skills, and problem-solving. Wherever possible, it is also designed to provide learning opportunities to improve personal effectiveness; to provide wider knowledge of the world of work and elsewhere; and to furnish the trainee with skills which can be transferred to other situations.

For this particular project the following information may be useful:

TASK 1

Ask the trainee(s) to arrange a visit to a place where they can see a number of different styles of greenhouse, and obtain leaflets and price lists. You will probably need to help them to locate such a place - via the Yellow Pages for example - and to help them with the arrangements - making telephone calls, or writing letters. On the visit itself, encourage the trainee(s) to ask questions of the staff and to collect any available literature.

TASK 2

Try to broaden out the trainees' awareness of all the factors involved in making or buying the greenhouse in discussion with them. They may well see cost as the only factor, but it may be important to stress what they will learn by doing one thing rather than the other.

TASK 3

Asks for a decision on the size of greenhouse needed. The trainee(s) may need help in measuring the site, and again, direction from you on, for instance, the advantages and disadvantages of going for the biggest possible greenhouse. When they come to make the decision encourage the trainees to think about HOW they intend to reach a decision. Voting, consensus, and dictat are likely methods to emerge. Try and get the trainee to see the pros and cons of each method.

From now on, it is important that the trainees remember the size they have decided on and stick to it, so that they are always comparing like with like.

TASK 4

Is difficult and no doubt the trainee(s) will need help and encouragement. It may be useful to detail off pairs of trainees, each of which obtain a quotation from a different company. Suggest different sources of information to them

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trade directories, Yellow Pages for instance - and different ways of getting the information - telephoning, writing, or calling on suppliers personally, for example.

Ensure that the prices are carefully noted and kept safely.

TASK 5

Is even more difficult and again will need a lot of support. The plan may be just a rough sketch indicating dimensions, or may be to scale if possible. They will need to think very carefully about construction methods and materials - what tools are available, and whether this limits their choice. Equally the preparation of the list of quantities will need to be carefully done and checked.

TASK 6

Again requires the trainees to do some digging around for information and similar sources and methods to those used in task 4 will be needed.

TASK 7

Requires a final decision on buying or building. Again, if a real choice is available within the cost constraints, encourage them to reach a decision systematically. If the cost of buying is outside your price range, but the trainees think that buying has outstanding advantages, it might be worth encouraging them to put a case for an increase in cash to the Manager.

TASK 8

Is the buying option. It may be interesting for the trainees to see how the scheme goes about ordering supplies and to consider the advantages of erecting the greenhouse, rather than leaving this to the suppliers.

TASK 9

Is another complicated one. The important thing here, though, is that trainees should have a go at planning and thinking ahead rather than that they should get the plans "right". However, it is important for the trainees to note the reasons why some of their time estimations have gone wrong.

TASK 10

Once the trainees and you are satisfied that all the necessary preparatory work has been carried out you can then go about building or erecting the greenhouse. If you have decided to build the greenhouse the trainees should obviously be involved in the construction process as this will help develop their practical skills as well as understanding and practising those skills needed in the preparation and completion of practical activities.

Names

TRAINEE .....

SUPERVISOR .....

TUTOR .....

Times

Please fill in the table below. This will show the time you spend on completing this project. The first column has been filled in as an example. Make another table if you need more space.

DATE	16/6			
START	2.00			
FINISH	3.30			
TIME SPENT (HOURS)	1½			

BACKGROUND

Painting is perhaps the most common form of protection and method of improving the finish of work that exists within the building trade. As there are many paints now on the market, attention must be paid to which paint should be used for particular jobs. Also in recent years alternative METHODS of painting have been introduced and yet paint brushes and all that goes with them are still the most commonly used tools for applying paint.

This assignment is designed to get you to investigate the many different types of materials and equipment which are available and could be used by your firm. Having investigated the alternatives you will be asked to make recommendations appropriate to a particular job.

SITUATION

The project is intended for a small building contractor or repair work team.

PURPOSES

This project will help you and your supervisor decide which greenhouse to buy (or build) for your scheme. The greenhouse is to be used by the trainees so it is an important part of the scheme's programme.

By working through the project you will be put in touch with some local firms which supply greenhouses either already built or which can sell you the necessary parts so that you can build it yourself.

Doing this project will enable you to learn more about horticulture. It will also help you to develop your CORE SKILLS (number, communication, problem-solving, and practical skills). Increasing your abilities in these skills will make it easier for you to change jobs and retrain when the need arises.

The tasks you are asked to do are outlined below, together with the most important CORE SKILLS that they contain. When you have finished each task, ask your supervisor to tell you how well she/he thought you did in the task, and record this on the Assessment Form near the back of this Project. This record will be needed to complete your Certificate at the end of YTS year.

WBP TASK	ACTIVITY	CORE SKILL
1.	Find out information about types of greenhouses suitable for your scheme.	Find out information by speaking to other people. 6.1 Find out information from written sources. 6.2
2.	Compare the advantages and disadvantages of buying or building a greenhouse.	Discuss with other people in the workplace how things are to be done. 8.6 Compare the relative costs and benefits of buying or using goods and services. 5.2
3.	Work out what kind of greenhouse would be best for your purposes.	Measure the dimensions of an object or structure. 4.1
	Find out about other things which will help you decide, and ask other people in the scheme or experienced gardeners for their advice.	Find out information by speaking to other people. 6.1

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	Decide between you what size of greenhouse you want.	Decide between alternative courses of action. 10.3
4.	Plan how to get the right type of information and where to get it from.	Find out information by speaking to other people. 6.1 Find out information from written sources. 6.2
5.	Plan the greenhouse and work out all the different factors that will help you arrive at a final cost for BUILDING the greenhouse.	Compare numerical information from different sources. 1.4 Provide information in writing, and by means of tables and diagrams. 7.3 Plan tools, equipment, machinery and stock and materials needed for a task. 9.3 Decide between alternative courses of action. 10.3 Plan the arrangement of items. 9.4 Plan how to present information. 9.6 Work our numerical information. 1.2
6.	Find out how much it would cost to buy the materials from local firms.	Find out information from written sources. 6.2 Compare numerical information from different sources. 1.4
7.	Choose between building or buying the greenhouse based on the figures supplied to you.	Decide between alternative courses of action. 10.3 Discuss with other people in the workplace how things are to be done. 8.6 Provide information by speaking to other people in the workplace. 7.1

Each CORE SKILL is identified by number in the PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE to the YTS CORE, which contains advice and guidance on what CORE SKILLS are and their uses. The numbers are included here for ease of reference.

ACTION PLAN

Read through this carefully first and talk it over with your supervisor. So that you can decide which is the best way of getting a greenhouse for you to use, you need to think about the differences between buying one or making one. The first few tasks should help you to do this.

TASK 1

Arrange a visit to a place where they make or sell greenhouses. Look at the different sorts of greenhouses for sale and try and find out as much as you can about them by asking the staff questions. Collect leaflets on the different greenhouses, and a price list.

TASK 2

With the others in your group, talk about and compare the advantages and disadvantages of buying a greenhouse compared with building one. Think not only about cost, but about other things like convenience, and what skills you will gain. Talk about these things with your supervisor as well. Make a list of all the things you think of - you may need it later.

TASK 3

Estimate the size of greenhouse you need. This will depend upon:

1. the space available to build the greenhouse.
   (If you have not measured this space yet, now might be a good time to do it).

2. the plants you want to grow.

Talk to others in the group about these things, and to anybody else who knows about the use of greenhouses - a keen gardener or one of the other workers on the site might be able to give you some good help and advice.

When you have done this, make a decision as a group on the size of greenhouse you want - this is important for the next task.

Before you can make a final decision on whether to buy or to build, you will need to find out about costs in detail.

TASK 4

Working with the size of greenhouse you decided on in task 3, find out the names and addresses of firms who make or sell greenhouses, such as the one you visited in task 1. Where are you going to get their names from? How are you going to find out how much a greenhouse costs? It might help if you worked in pairs on this task rather than as a whole group. Try to get at least three prices (quotations) from different companies. You might find that the price varies a lot from firm to firm, and according to what the greenhouse is made of. Why do you think this is?

Make a note of the prices quoted to you by the firms and compare them by noting which price is for which greenhouse.

TASK 5

Working out a price for a greenhouse you want to build yourself is a bit more complicated.

First of all you will need to draw a plan to scale of the greenhouse you want to build - remember to keep it the same size as you decided in task 3. Do this with the others in the group and with your supervisor.

Plan carefully about what you need to show on the plan - the door and any opening windows, and where to locate the stagings for instance. What size and quality of timber will you need to use? Do you need to use glass or is there a cheaper alternative available?

Then you will need to prepare a list of the materials you will need. Work very carefully at this - if you get it wrong it could cost a lot of money. You will need to list the amounts you need of timber, glass (or substitute), screws, and fittings (window and door fastenings for instance). Check that you haven't left anything out, and that your calculations are right.

TASK 6

Find out how much it will cost to buy the materials in your list. Firms who supply materials like this are called "Builders' Merchants". There should be three or four quite near your site. Try and get prices (quotations) from at least three Builders' Merchants and compare the different quotations. You may find that the price varies a lot for the same material from one supplier to another.

You should now have enough information for you to decide between buying or building. Check how much money you can spend first!

TASK 7

Talk over all the things you have found out about price, materials, and so on. So long as both buying and building are within the amount of cash you've got to spend, you can decide what you're going to do. Together with the others in the group, look at the list of advantages and disadvantages you came up with in task 2.

Are there any more that you want to add now that you've found out a bit more about greenhouses? In the light of what you've found about costs, and considering all the advantages and disadvantages, try to come to a decision which you can all agree on. Let your supervisor know the decision, and see if you can get him to agree with you.

If you decide to buy, go on to task 8 If you decide to build, go on to task 9.

TASK 8

There's not much more for you to do. The order for the greenhouse needs to be placed. Find out how your Scheme orders things and provide all the information needed for the order to be placed. It will probably take a week or two to be delivered. You can often save some money by doing the erection yourself, but you will need to decide this before the order goes in. Is it worth the saving? What advantages are there in erecting it yourself?

TASK 9

You will now need to plan out carefully the work you have to do. Draw up a list of the jobs to be done, and the order in which they are to be done. Estimate how long each job will take. Decide who in the group is going to do each job - or whether you're all going to have a go at everything. Ideally, you should place your order with the Builders' Merchants (see task 6 and the quotations you got then) a few days before you need the material - it's no use, for instance, ordering glass at the start. It's likely to get broken before you need to fit it! You will need to check, though, to make sure that goods are delivered on time.

Your supervisor will help you with all this.

TASK 10

Go ahead and build the greenhouse, using the plans you made in task 9 to guide you, changing them if necessary.

Get together the tools and equipment you will need at each stage and check them to make sure they are in good condition. Remember to work safely all the time, and to clear up tools properly at the end of each day. At the end of each stage, and when the greenhouse is completed, check that your work is of the standard required by your supervisor.

TRAINEE REVIEW

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE AND DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR AND TUTOR.

1. Were you offered a selection of Projects to choose from? If so, why did you choose this one?

2. What did you think of it? Was it - easy, hard, interesting or boring?

3. What did you learn? (Look at the list of Purposes).

4. Did you learn something which was not on the list of Purposes?

5. Did you need help with any particular part of the Project? What kind of help did you get?

6. Were there any words in the Project that you did not understand? Please list them.

7. Do you think you could use what you learned in another job, or outside work?

8. Has this Project helped you decide whether you need further training in certain areas?

SUPERVISOR REVIEW

Please refer to Supervisor's Notes.

Please read the questions included under Trainee Review.

Please complete the Assessment Form and discuss your assessment with the trainee before initialling it to show that you both agree with the assessment.

COMMENTS:

ASSESSMENT

explanatory notes

In completing this wbp the trainee has the opportunity to demonstrate competence in the CORE SKILLS listed on the attached form.

The first two columns list the wbp Tasks and the CORE SKILLS which occur within them.

You are asked to assess the trainee's competence in these CORE SKILLS according to the amount of support from you that the trainee needed, for example:-

1) if a trainee is asked to "find information from written sources" and you provide the trainee with all the sources of that information, together with telling the trainee where to look in any particular source, then that trainee is obviously being given much more support in finding that information than a trainee who identifies the sources and extracts correct information unaided;

2) if a trainee is asked to undertake a task which involves "noticing the needs of customers or clients", and needs considerable prompting to approach a customer, then that trainee is obviously being given more support than a trainee who takes the initiative in approaching the customer.

To be regarded as fully competent in the CORE SKILLS, the trainee should need to be offered no more support than you would normally give to any experienced worker.

Most of the time job competence and CORE SKILLS competence are likely to be the same, but sometimes this may not be so. For instance, a trainee involved in machining a particular component may be competent so far as planning the work is concerned (a CORE SKILL), but may not have reached experienced worker speeds (an occupational skill).

Please tick the appropriate box and initial in the space provided, after you have discussed your assessment with the trainee and agreed any further training required.

ASSESSMENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN GLASS HOUSES WBP NO M/03/002 DATE

TRAINEE'S NAME SUPERVISOR'S NAME

WBP TASK NO	CORE SKILLS ASSESSED	NEEDED A LOT OF ASSISTANCE	NEEDED SOME ASSISTANCE	LITTLE OR NO ASSISTANCE		COMMENTS: INCLUDING NO OPPORTUNITY	AGREED INITIALS	
				NEEDS MORE PRACTICE	COMPETENT		TRAINEE	SUPERVISOR
1,3,4	6.1 Find out information by speaking to other people.							
1,4,6	6.2 Find out information from written sources.							
2,7	8.6 Discuss with other people in the workplace how things are to be done.							
2	5.2 Compare the relative costs and benefits of buying or using goods and services.							
3	4.1 Measure the dimensions of an object or structure.							
3,5,7	10.3 Decide between alternative courses of action.							
5,6	1.4 Comapre numerical information from different sources.							
5	7.3 Provide information in writing, and by means of tables and diagrams.							

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ASSESSMENT FORM continued.

WDP TASK NO	CORE SKILLS ASSESSED	NEEDED A LOT OF ASSISTANCE	NEEDED SOME ASSISTANCE	LITTLE OR NO ASSISTANCE		COMMENTS INCLUDING NO OPPORTUNITY	AGREED INITIALS	
				NEEDS MORE PRACTICE	COMPETENT		TRAINEE	SUPERVISOR
5	9.3 Plan tools, equipment, machinery and stock and materials needed for a task.							
5	9.4 Plan the arrangements of items.							
5	9.6 Plan how to present information.							
5	1.2 Work out numerical information.							
7	7.1 Provide information by speaking to other people in the workplace.							